Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat | Secrétariat du Conseil du Trésor du Canada

N F O C F g r o u p

Attitudes Towards The Use Of Both Official Languages Within The Public Service Of Canada

Executive Report

August 2002

M0425/PFD/JP/PB

Prepared by • Préparé par

NFO CFgroup
Patterson Langlois Consultants
Bélisle Marketing Ltée

Presented to • Présenté à

Treasury Board Of Canada, Secretariat
Commissioner Of Official Languages
Communication Canada
Canadian Heritage

info@nfocfgroup.com
www.nfocfgroup.com

Canada

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

1.0 Foreword 1

A. Background Information 1

1. The Official Languages Act 1

B. Objectives Of The Study 3

C. General Design And Execution 4

1. Quantitative Survey 4

2. Qualitative Enquiries 4

2.0 Key Results 6

A. Highlights 6

B. Status Of The Two Official Languages In The Public Service 9

1. Self-Assessed Knowledge Of French And English 9

2. The Bilingual Environment 15

C. Official Languages Policy: Misconception And Misunderstanding 17

1. General 17

2. Lack Of Vision 19

3. The Geography Of Attitudes On Official Languages 20

4. Fairness Of Official Languages Policies 23

5. Test On Knowledge Of Official Languages Policies 25

6. Official Languages Training: Policies And Pitfalls 28

103-06378/

TABLE OF CONTENTS
(CONT'D)

PAGE

D. Attitudes About The Minority Community And Segmentation Of The Public Service 30

1. The View Of The Minority Language Community 30

2. Cluster Analysis 32

E. Some Perspectives On Official Languages Policies 39

1. The Weight Of Demographics 39

2. A Simplified Typology 40

3. Leadership 42

F. Conclusions And Recommendations 43

1.0 FOREWORD

A. Background Information

Last year the Government of Canada renewed its commitment to Official Languages as a key element of Canadian society and in the Speech from the Throne, undertook to ensure that all Canadians should be able to interact with the Government of Canada in either official language. In support of this commitment, Treasury Board Secretariat, in collaboration with the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, Communication Canada and Canadian Heritage carried out a research project regarding current attitudes towards the use of both official languages within the public service.

1. The Official Languages Act

The Official Languages Act sets out the following regulations governing the various aspects of communication and support for the two languages.

a. Service to the Public

The Official Languages Act requires the federal government to provide services to the public in English and French at all head offices and wherever there is significant demand for such services or where the nature of the office warrants. "Significant demand" and "nature of the office" are defined in regulations, which designate individual offices to provide bilingual services. Approximately one-quarter of all federal offices must provide services in both English and French.

b. Language of Work

Public servants have the right to work in their preferred official language in regions that are designated for this purpose (parts of Northern and Eastern Ontario, the National Capital Region, Montreal, parts of the Eastern Townships, Gaspé and Western Quebec, the province of New Brunswick). In these regions, their employer is required to create a favourable environment for the use of both official languages at work, including:

supervision in the employee's language, work instruments in the language of choice, and central and personal services in the employee's language. Outside these regions, the language of work is French in other parts of Quebec, and English in Atlantic Canada, the remaining parts of Ontario and Western Canada. In unilingual regions, employees are supervised in the regional language of work, and receive central and personal services in that language. They may have access to work instruments in their preferred language if they need them to provide service to the public.

c. Equitable Participation

The Official Languages Act commits the federal government to ensuring that English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians have equal access to employment and promotion in federal institutions. The linguistic composition of the federal workforce should reflect the presence of both communities in the population.

d. Advancement of English and French

Part VII of the Official Languages Act sets out a government commitment to support the development of English and French minority communities and to foster the recognition and use of both languages in Canadian society.

B. Objectives Of The Study

Official Languages policies and their effect on the public service have been scrutinized for many years notably through the annual reports of TBS, OCOL and PCH. The present study was undertaken in order to provide an exhaustive portrait of the situation obtaining at a specific point in time, both in terms of descriptive statistics (e.g. profile of bilingualism, unilingualism, etc.) but also, and more importantly, in terms of attitudes and opinions held by public servants about Official Languages policies. Specific objectives included the following:

- determine attitudes and levels of acceptance of Official Languages policies;
- assess the degree to which rights and obligations are understood and supported;
- assess the degree of correlation between knowledge of rights and obligation and degree of support;
- assess the level of understanding and commitment to the support of official languages minority communities;
- evaluate the level of satisfaction with the linguistic duality in the public service;
- establish benchmarks against which progress can be assessed.

Other objectives were more qualitative in nature (e.g. identify and assess levers appropriate to improving attitudes and augmenting the level of acceptance and use) and were the subject of a qualitative investigation described below.

C. General Design And Execution

1. Quantitative Survey

Treasury Board's Position and Classification Information System (PCIS) list of some 143,000 employees served as the sample frame. The list was stratified by the language requirement of the position (Bilingual, English, French) by region, first official language and size of employer. The effect of the stratification was to enhance the representativeness by reducing the sampling error within the classification variables.

Each sample element drawn from the PCIS list was matched with the Government Electronic Directory Services (GEDS) list of telephone numbers. However, because the GEDS list was non-exhaustive a number of other telephone lists had to be cross-referenced (notably for DND, DVA, IMC, PEN, REH).

Results were weighted back to the population distribution defined in the PCIS list and are therefore representative of Treasury Board's employee database. A total of 5,014 interviews were completed on the telephone in February, 2002. A sample of this size is accurate within ±1.4% 19 times out of 20.

2. Qualitative Enquiries

The qualitative portion of this study included multiple lines of enquiry: individual interviews with senior executives; face-to-face employee focus groups across the country; and online sessions (using both chat and bulletin-board approaches).

Interviews were conducted face-to-face and on the telephone with 30 senior federal employees. Respondents included French and English speaking individuals from across Canada, employed by federal departments and agencies of various sizes.

A total of fourteen (14) focus groups were completed, two each in the cities of Sudbury, Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec City, Vancouver, Moncton and Toronto. The recruiting process was organized to provide two groups in each city, split according to mother tongue or preferred official language of the potential participant.

The online sessions provided a forum for public servants outside the large centres. Five chat sessions were conducted: two in English, two in French, and one moderated bilingually. Twenty-eight participants took part in these sessions. We also conducted six bulletin board sessions: two in French, two in English, and two bilingually. Eighty-six participants took part in the sessions.

The qualitative work was conducted over a three month period covering December 2001, through to the end of February, 2002.

2.0 KEY RESULTS

A. Highlights

- ✓ Bilingualism in the public service is asymmetric and follows the population distribution of Francophones across the country; the definition of bilingualism developed for this survey places it at 42% for the public service as a whole.

- ✓ In terms of the written word, public servants estimate 62% of the work documents they receive are in English only, 11% in French only, and 27% in Both languages. Most public servants are satisfied with these proportions.

- ✓ The asymmetric treatment of the two official languages is revealed when Bilingual Anglophones who work in a bilingual environment speak French 14% of the time in contrast with bilingual Francophones (in a bilingual environment) who speak English 43% of the time.

- ✓ Most public servants (80%+) are relatively satisfied with the way in which Official Languages policies affect their personal situation and most are ready to make some effort to foster bilingualism. Most feel that any linguistic problems that arise can be resolved equitably and most *do not* feel that promoting bilingualism is a waste of time and money.

- ✓ Many public servants are misinformed about the specific linguistic policies as defined in the Official Languages Act. Many are not clear what the goal of the policy is.

- ✓ Geography has a bearing on how public servants view Official Languages both in terms of proximity to Ottawa and to Francophone communities. "Buy-in" increases as proximity increases.

- ✓ Around 70% of public servants feel Official Languages policies are fair.

- ✓ In terms of specific knowledge of Official Languages policies, Francophones claimed more knowledge than Anglophones, but did not possess more knowledge, in fact the opposite was true.

- ✓ The message on language training is mixed. Some feel there is sufficient access for those who want it, others feel resources are too limited and thus access is denied. Many respondents believe that the burden of language training is borne disproportionately by individuals, with little support from the organization.

- ✓ Most public servants agree that it is important to serve the public in both official languages. The view public servants have of the situation of the minority language group in their region is also very much governed by geography. Public servants in Quebec and New Brunswick have the most positive view around these issues.

- ✓ Public servants can be divided into 7 mutually exclusive groups that reflect specific opinions and attitudes about official languages and various demographic characteristics. This segmentation could be used to target specific messages to specific groups as part of the communication strategy.

Conclusion

Our view, based on the research results, is that the overall linguistic situation in the public service, although not perfect, does appear to be quite good with adequate levels of bilingualism across most entities. Beyond the small minority, cynicism and recalcitrance have not set in and there still appears to be a feeling in the large majority of public servants that bilingualism is a goal worth pursuing. Linguistic tensions exist to some degree but most public servants seem to be relatively satisfied with their personal linguistic situation. Public servants are clearly not an homogeneous mass but can be differentiated into smaller groups that encompass much more complex visions of the linguistic situation they face at work and in everyday life in their community.

In order to improve delivery and perceptions relating to Official Languages within the public service of Canada, three fundamental issues must be addressed:

- **Axis 1: Defining the 'ideal' Official Languages work environment** -- there is far from a consensus on the end goal of the policy and the spectrum extends from a fully bilingual public service to those who feel the whole issue should be dropped;

- **Axis 2: Redressing misperceptions about the breadth and demands of the policy** -- public servants must be informed about the policy, particularly as it relates to language of work;

- **Axis 3: Establishing clearer standards in hierarchical communications** -- the onus is on the person at the higher level to speak the language of the person at the lower level. Ambiguity around the hierarchy of communication in terms of language must be cleared up.

B. Status Of The Two Official Languages In The Public Service

1. Self-Assessed Knowledge Of French And English

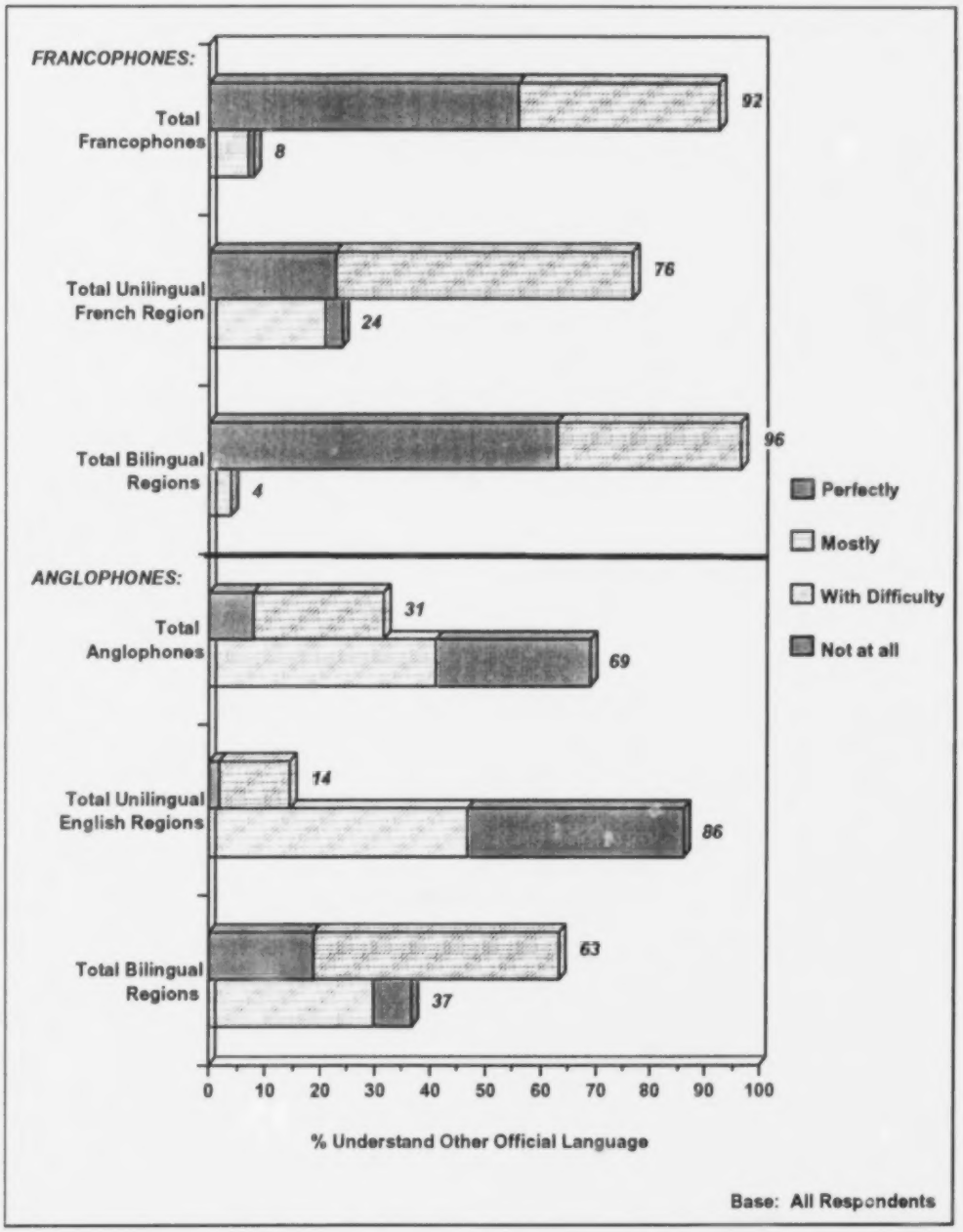
Public servants were asked to assess their own ability to speak and understand the other official language. Knowledge of the other official language is very asymmetric in the federal public service. Most Francophones (i.e. in terms of their first official language) can understand/speak English whereas only about one-in-three Anglophones can do so for French.

In the Unilingual French region, three-quarters of public servants (76%) claim to **understand** English "perfectly" or "mostly". This is in marked contrast to Unilingual English regions where only 14% of public servants claim to **understand** French.

In Bilingual regions, nearly all Francophones (96%) claim to understand English ("perfectly" or "mostly") compared to 63% for Anglophones in terms of understanding French.

(See Exhibit: 1-a))

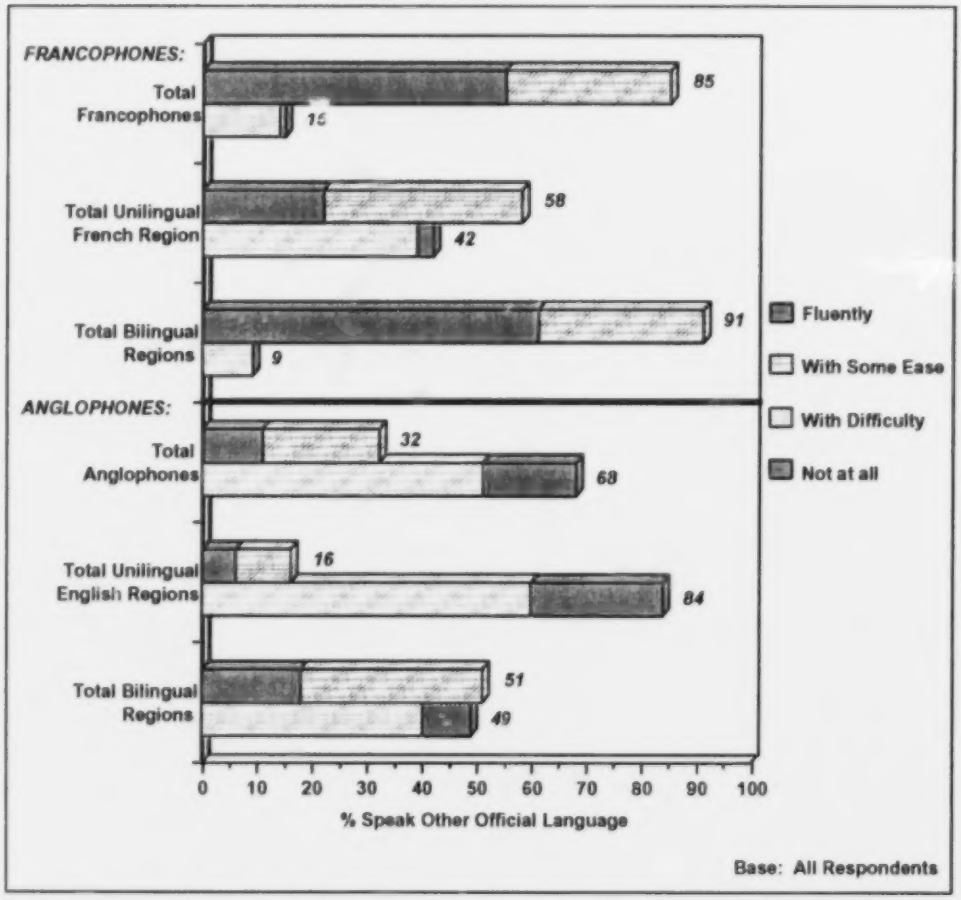
EXHIBIT: 1-a)
**Self-Assessed Knowledge Of Other Official Language
Among Public Servants
– Understand –**



Understanding a language is one thing and speaking it is another. In Bilingual regions 91% of Francophones claim to be able to **speak** English "fluently" or "with some ease" compared to 51% of those with English as their first official language and their claims for **speaking** French.

The obvious conclusion. There are many Anglophones in Bilingual regions who do not speak much French.

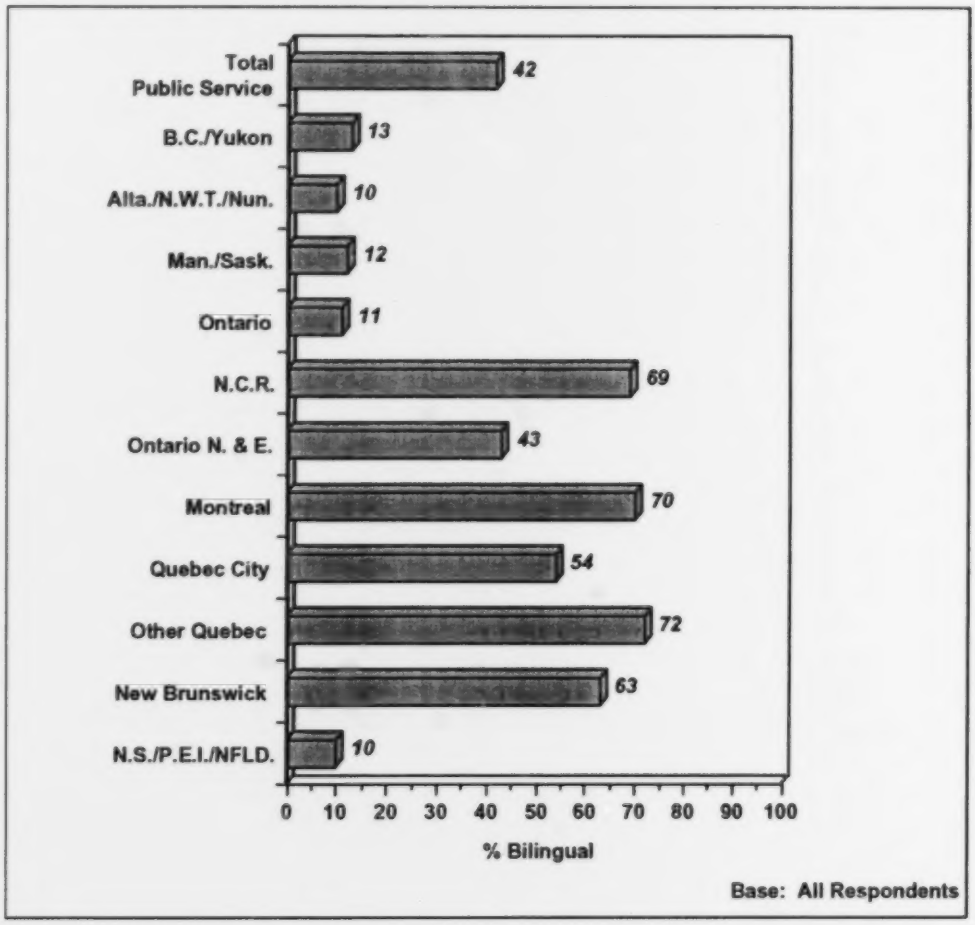
EXHIBIT: 1-b)
Self-Assessed Knowledge Of Other Official Language Among Public Servants – Speak –



Instead of just asking respondents whether they were bilingual or not we constructed a variable for bilingualism. To be considered bilingual for the purposes of this study, an individual had to claim to understand the other official language "perfectly" or "mostly" **and** to speak it "fluently" or "with some ease".

Using this definition of bilingualism, 42% of the federal public service would qualify as such. Bilingualism follows the population distribution of Francophones across the country starting in the N.C.R. and working east through to New Brunswick.

EXHIBIT: 1-c)
Profile Of Bilingualism In The Federal Public Service
– By Region –



Linguistic duality also applies to the written word and overall, according to the public servants who were interviewed, 62% of documents they receive in the course of their work are in English only, 11% are in French only, and the balance, 27%, are in Both Languages. Of course, government policies do not require all documents to be produced or circulated in both official languages; only work instruments or documents that will be widely circulated must be in both.

The proportion of bilingual documents does not vary very much across the country with a range of 40% in New Brunswick to 23% across the Unilingual English regions. However, the proportion of English only documents varies considerably from a low of 22% in Montreal to 76% across the various Unilingual English regions.

Most public servants are satisfied with the proportion of English, French and Bilingual documents they receive. Dissatisfaction is highest in Bilingual regions (17% of public servants are dissatisfied) where the proportion of English only documents could be reduced in favour of more French only or Bilingual documents. Even in Unilingual French Quebec, the dissatisfied would like to see more bilingual documents (39% would like more).

The asymmetric treatment of the two languages can be noted in terms of the proportion of French only documents in Unilingual English Regions (hardly any) to 22% English only in Unilingual French Quebec.

(See Exhibit: 4)

EXHIBIT: 4

Proportion Of Work Documents Received In English And French

	Total (5,014) %	Total Bilingual Regions (2,411) %	NCR (1,898) %	Mtl. (265) %	N.B. (148) %	Total Unilingual English Regions (2,238) %	Total Unilingual French Region (365) %
Linguistic Profile Of Documents Received:							
English Only	62	55	60	22	53	76	22
French Only	11	14	10	46	7	1	51
Both Languages	27	31	30	32	40	23	27
Yes, Satisfied With These Proportions	88	81	80	80	89	96	83
No, Not Satisfied	11	17	18	19	10	4	17
Proportion Of English And French Documents Would Prefer Among Those Not Satisfied:	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
English Only	36	32	35	13	17	73	14
French Only	27	27	26	35	17	10	47
Both Languages	38	41	39	52	66	17	39

(Source: Detailed Tables p. 88–9, 98–9)

2. The Bilingual Environment

Bilingual public servants were asked about how much time they spent speaking each of the official languages in the course of their working day (excluding interactions with members of the public with whom they might have been in contact).

Bilingual Anglophones who work in a bilingual environment speak French about 14% of the time according to their estimates. Only in Montreal does the bilingual Anglophone spend more than half his/her time speaking French.

On the other hand, the bilingual Francophone spends close to half the time (43%) speaking English when he/she is in a bilingual environment. Speaking English is most prevalent in Ontario North & East (66%), in the National Capital Region (54%) and New Brunswick (43%) and least prevalent in Montreal (10%).

Most bilingual Francophones are satisfied with the proportion of English they speak (around 80% are satisfied). In Montreal, the minority of dissatisfied Francophones (i.e. the remaining 20%) would like to speak a little more English.

On the bilingual Anglophone side, the majority are satisfied with the proportion of French they speak but a significant minority (around one-third) are not satisfied with 14% of the time spent speaking French. Among the dissatisfied (notably in the National Capital Region and New Brunswick), they would like to triple the amount of time they spend speaking French. In Ontario North & East, the dissatisfied would like to speak nearly four times more French.

(See Exhibits: 5-a)/5-b))

EXHIBIT: 5-a)
Percent Of Time Bilingual Anglophones Working In A Bilingual Working Environment Speak French

	Total Bilingual Regions (1,125) %	NCR (1,007) %	Ont. N & E (38)* %	Mtl. (22)* %	N.B. (57)* %
Bilingual Anglophones:					
Percent Of Time Spent Speaking French	14	13	6	62	10
Yes, Satisfied With This Proportion Of French	65	64	75	88	71
	%	%	%	%	%
Proportion Of French Would Prefer Among Those Not Satisfied	38	39	23	60	31

* Caution: Small Base Size

(Source: Detailed Tables p. 75)

EXHIBIT: 5-b)
Percent Of Time Bilingual Francophones Working In A Bilingual Working Environment Speak English

	Total Bilingual Regions (1,170) %	NCR (806) %	Ont. N & E (17)* %	Mtl. (237) %	N.B. (70) %
Bilingual Francophones:					
Percent Of Time Spent Speaking English	43	54	66	10	43
Yes, Satisfied With This Proportion Of English	79	77	98	80	92
	%	%	%	%	%
Proportion Of English Would Prefer Among Those Not Satisfied	47	50	62	35	48

* Caution: Small Base Size

(Source: Detailed Tables p. 80)

C. Official Languages Policy: Misconception And Misunderstanding

1. General

Despite a long history of Official Languages legislation, policies and directives, there is a considerable variation in how the policy is understood. There was evidence, both qualitative and quantitative, that public servants at all levels misconstrue and misunderstand the requirements of the Official Languages Act. As summarized by one individual:

> *I believe the Official Languages Policy is that everyone has the choice of which language they want to be served in or work in. As federal public servants, the Official Languages Policy states that you will serve the general public in the language of their choice - French or English.*

Obviously this public servant is confusing service to the public and language of work and these misunderstandings (especially among Anglophones) inevitably give rise to exaggerated views of what the policy actually demands and is at the source of some of the resentment that was encountered (if only because it suggests an inflated sense of the burden that the policy places on individuals and work groups). Similarly, errors of comprehension colour expectations, and place the policy in a negative light when measured against what appears to be unreasonable expectation. As another example, many public servants believe the goal of policies is to make the majority of positions bilingual (29% of Anglophones and 40% of Francophones believe this).

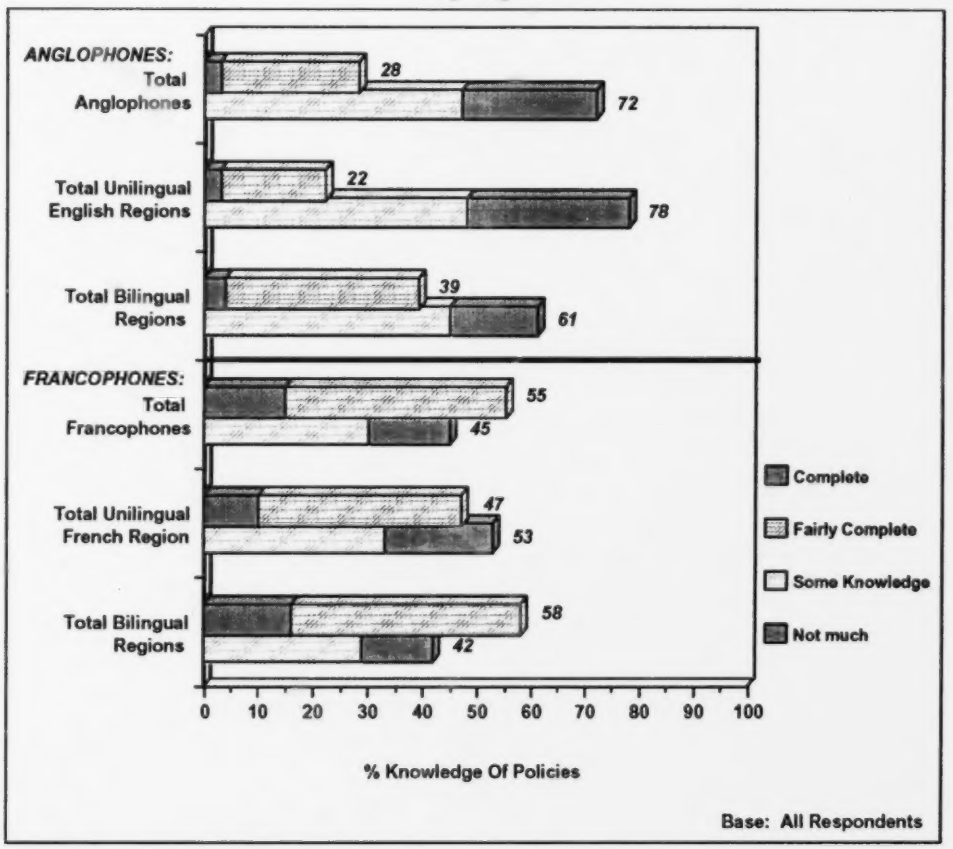
The quantitative findings were striking: only 28% of Anglophones and 55% of Francophones claimed to have "complete" or "fairly complete" knowledge about the policies. Public servants who work in bilingual regions did claim more knowledge of policies, however. (See Exhibit: 6, page following).

Generally, respondents tend to believe more in the performance of their department than they do in the *need* for services in both languages. Consequently, there is a strong tendency to presume that departments deliver, and a varying tendency to question the need in some areas. Most participants concur, however, with the Government's policy of communicating with the public in both official languages.

In fact, most public servants are satisfied with the government's linguistic policies (83%), most would be willing to make an effort to foster bilingualism in the workplace (86%), and most feel that any linguistic problems that arise can be resolved equitably (77%). Furthermore, most do *not* feel (79%) that promoting bilingualism in the public service is a waste of time and money.

However, it is also clear that some employees have no stake in the success of the policy or the Act and will resist its implementation. For some Anglophones, the policy is seen as wasteful and ineffective pandering. For some Francophones, by contrast, any failure of the policy is insulting evidence of their continued victimization by an uncaring and disrespectful majority.

EXHIBIT: 6
Self-Assessed Knowledge Of Policies In Official Languages Act Among Public Servants – By Region –



2. Lack Of Vision

Participants in the research (the evidence here was primarily qualitative) seemed far from a consensus on what the end goal of the policy is, or how they might describe an "ideal" official languages working environment. The more formed of these visions extended across a spectrum between a fully bilingual public service to a more limited vision of a functionally or passively bilingual public service. (Acknowledging as well the perspective of the unconvertible (also known, more optimistically, as the "unconverted" who would like to see the whole question of language dropped!). The ambiguity that exists in this sense, however, is apparently the source of much impediment. Without this commonly described and acknowledged vision of the end-goal, collective progress is hampered simply because it voids any possibility of common measures of progress or understanding. In such an absence, it is unavoidable that participants look to the complaint process, as the absence of complaints is arguably the only standard for progress that can be considered tangible. Moreover, some aspects are incompatible with the perceived aims, policies and procedures of the employer: if the goal is ultimately to make everyone bilingual, then it does not stand to reason that the employer would see fit to restrict access to language training.

Coupled with a lack of vision of the goals is a lack of context that is decried by some:

> *I think the folks at the Official Languages Commission need to remind people why the Act and its policies exist. Usually their information campaigns just tell us what we have to do – about signage or greetings or service. They could foster a more positive attitude by changing their approach – in some way instilling us with pride in our bilingual heritage!! That being said – at what point do we stop trying to force the issue? I doubt there is any threat to losing the English language at work or at home – but without the legislation is there not a threat to the French language? (English Bulletin-board Group I1)*

3. The Geography Of Attitudes On Official Languages

The geography of the policy on official languages is clearly defined in the Act and Regulations. Federal institutions have a duty to offer their services actively in both languages in all head or central offices of federal institutions in any part of the country and wherever there is significant demand for services in either official language. Furthermore, the federal government has designated certain regions as areas where its employees should be encouraged to work in their own language; the National Capital Region, certain regions in Northern and Eastern Ontario, the Montreal region, certain parts of the Eastern Townships, the Gaspé and Western Quebec, and New Brunswick. The geography of the policies is one thing and the geography of attitudes is another.

There are at least two ways of describing how geography appears to have a bearing on how public servants view official languages: as a function of what we traditionally understand as Canada's East-West political dynamic, or, alternatively, as a function of relative proximity or distance from the political "center" of Ottawa or from Francophone communities. In either case, this variable's impact on public servants is generally the same. Participants' "buy-in", or endorsement of the Act's aims, their sensitivity for the Act's potential impact on the "other" language group, and even their understanding of the letter and spirit of the Act tend to decrease noticeably as we move further away from Ottawa.

This geographic dimension is visible in some of the attitudes and perspectives expressed, or in how they appear to change from location to location:

- Some believe that the policy was, in effect, designed and conceived in Ottawa as a way of bringing the issue of French to Canada's geographical extremities. Others, taking a simpler tack, feel that the policy is only relevant where there are French-speaking minorities of a significant size.

- The imperative – the perceived need for such a policy – appears to be dramatically impacted by exposure to the "other" language group, and decreases in importance as participants are more distanced from the other community (this tendency being most pronounced among Anglophones). For

several participants in BC, for example, the idea that the public service should cater to French-speaking people reflects an artificial imperative. For these individuals, this dictate has little to do with need (they argue that the public service would do better in BC to insist on Cantonese as a second language), and a lot more to do with "Ottawa's political agenda".

A more focused examination of some of the individual perspectives expressed about official languages suggests that we might expect additional impacts and implications from these geographical variants:

- The "stakes" in adhering to (or even in ignoring) the policy are apparently reduced in amplitude and personal relevance with distance from Ottawa. In general, participants further away from Ottawa (both literally and in terms of understanding or buy-in to the "issue of French") tend to attach less importance to compliance with the Act. In some respects, this reflects a sense that the policy is more *institutionally* than personally relevant. Generally, the tendency in these places is to see the policy as something that matters more for others. Arguably, in personal terms, and even in terms of impact on the working environment, the degree of one's personal or organizational adherence to the letter and spirit of the Act is relatively negligible, particularly if the "other" language group is diminutive in size or in lesser proximity.

- While somewhat of a generalization, we do see evidence to suggest that individual's understanding of the letter of the Act – its broad aims and specific regulations – decreases in accuracy the further away we are from the political center of the country. Parenthetically, some of the more exaggerated views about what the policy requires of public servants were heard in these areas.

- Concomitantly, we saw some evidence to suggest that participants' ability to articulate the aims of the policy – its desired outcome and general spirit – also decrease in cohesion as we move further away in this geographical sense. Whereas participants in other areas are more inclined to see these aims in personal or organizational terms (the policy being about promoting

bilingualism or protecting rights, for example), it seemed generally true that participants from these more distanced locations were less able to even articulate what the ultimate aim or spirit of the act is. A core perspective, heard more often in Vancouver than elsewhere, is that the Official Languages Act aims only to *force* the public service into accommodating French-speaking clients and workers.

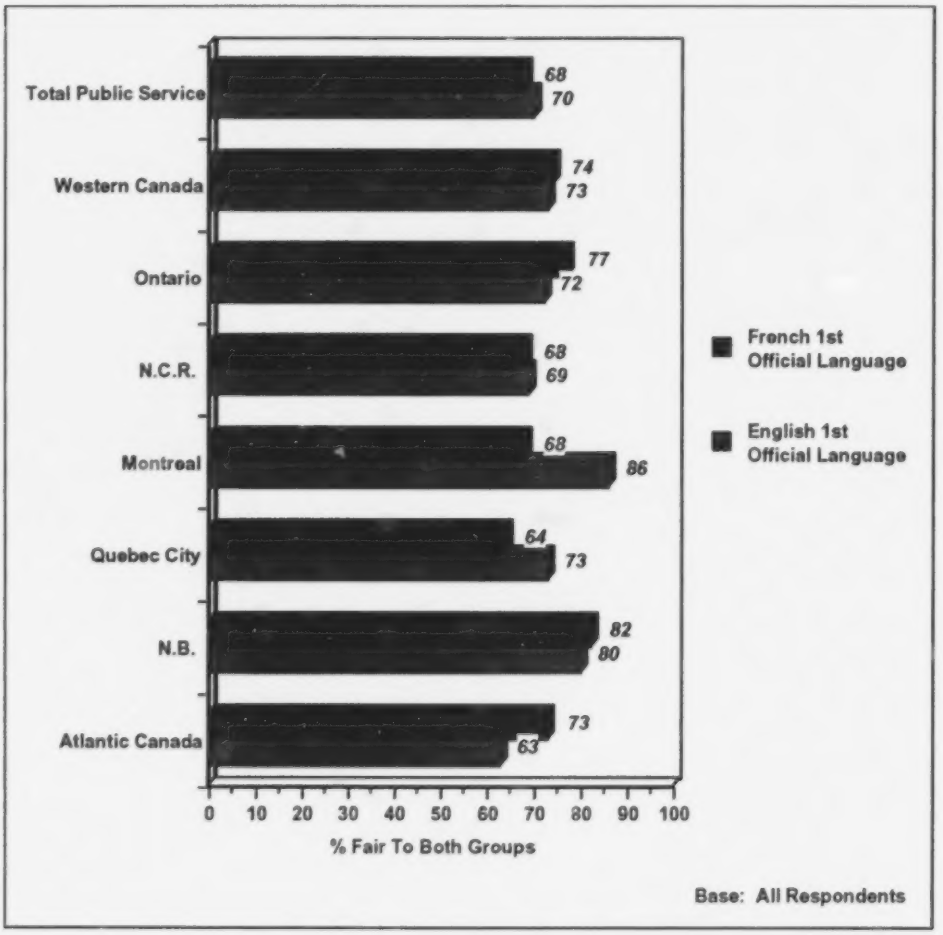
- Finally, it also seemed generally true that participants in these more outlying areas (those further removed either literally or figuratively from the center) were apparently more preoccupied about the sanctions surrounding the program than its rewards. Accordingly, complaints and inspections and the intervention of OCOL, were more present in the preoccupations of these participants. The notion of rewards associated with compliance with official languages, on the other hand, seemed a remote idea. Few mentioned the bilingual bonus, for example, in positive terms.

Ultimately, then, it seems important only to recognize that this geographical variable exists, and that it has apparent value as a general predictor of openness and buy-in toward the policy, the Act, and the related regulations.

4. Fairness Of Official Languages Policies

In order to be effective, policies have to be seen to be fair and overall about 70% of public servants feel they are fair. This, of course, leaves about 30% who do not think they are fair. On a regional basis the feeling that policies are not fair is most prevalent in Alberta, Ontario, the National Capital Region, Quebec City and Atlantic Canada (excluding New Brunswick).

EXHIBIT: 7
Opinion On Fairness Of Official Languages Policies



Among those who feel policies are unfair, Anglophones feel Official Languages policies are unfair to English-speakers (64%) whereas Francophones feel they are unfair to French-speakers (87%).

EXHIBIT: 8
Groups Official Languages Policies Are Unfair To

	Feel Policies Are Unfair And First Official Language	
	English (476) %	French (355) %
Unfair To Anglophones	64	8
Unfair To Francophones	14	87
Unfair To Both	22	4

When asked for the main reason why the policies were felt to be unfair we note that Francophones mentioned the fact that "en réunion l'anglais prédomine bien que la majorité soit francophone".

On the Anglophone side of the picture no single factor emerges in terms of discriminatory practices beyond feelings of injustice ("Small requirement for other language", "They are forcing us to learn the other language", etc.).

5. Test On Knowledge Of Official Languages Policies

Although many respondents claimed knowledge of Official Languages policies, one of the survey objectives was to quantify to what extent policies had been correctly understood and absorbed over the years. Thus, in order to measure the amount of real knowledge public servants had, eight specific policies were presented as True–False statements and respondents were asked about each one (3 were True and 5 were False).

Even after many years of Official Languages policies there remains a considerable amount of incorrect impressions and imperfect knowledge among federal public servants. In the table following, we rank ordered the eight policies by the proportion of wrong answers in descending order from the most to the least. The top two policies in terms of the large number of wrong answers relate first of all to the active offer of both languages by public servants. It is not the client's responsibility to request service in the language of choice, but up to the institution to offer that choice. Most survey respondents did not realize this including most of those in bilingual positions.

Almost equally ranked with the preceding statement, most public servants seem to think that bilingual services must be provided in ***all*** offices across the country. Bilingual service is, in fact, offered as a matter of course in ***designated*** offices across the country.

Finally, among the top ranked wrong answers, most public servants (better than 70%) are under the impression that they have the right to work in their preferred official language, when in fact this is true only in regions that have been designated bilingual for language of work (Ontario N & E, the N.C.R., Montreal, some other parts of Quebec, and New Brunswick).

The other policies presented to public servants did not score as poorly as the three previous statements, however, they all received significant numbers of incorrect answers. A large number of public servants, for example, felt that "Language policies allow supervisors to determine the language of work". Even in the case of what can only be considered as the most fundamental aspect of the policies which is to ensure equal status of French and English in the public service, some felt it was false, notably among Francophones.

Earlier we saw that Francophones claimed to have more knowledge of Official Languages policies than their English speaking counterparts. As can be noted, when tested for knowledge via our series of eight questions, Francophones were more likely to give incorrect answers than Anglophones on just about every one of the statements.

Further analysis revealed that public servants who claimed more knowledge did not, in fact, possess it to any great degree.

(See Exhibit: 9)

EXHIBIT: 9
Test On Knowledge Of Eight Aspects Of The Language Policies

Ranking Of Statements By Proportion Of *Incorrect* Answers	1st Official Language: English (3,403) %	1st Official Language: French (1,646) %
It Is Client's Responsibility To Request Service In The Language Of Choice (Statement Is False) **% Said "True"**	76	85
Bilingual Services To The Public Must Be Provided In All Offices Across The Country (Statement Is False) **% Said "True"**	76	77
All Employees Have The Right To Work In Their Preferred Official Language (Statement Is False) **% Said "True"**	75	69
The Goal Of Policies Is To Make The Majority Of Positions Bilingual (Statement Is False) **% Said "True"**	29	40
Policies Allow Supervisors To Determine Language Of Work (Statement Is False) **% Said "True"**	21	33
Some Regions Are Designated Bilingual For Language Of Work (Statement Is True) **% Said "False"**	18	16
Language Policies Ensure Equal Access To Jobs For English And French Speaking Canadians (Statement Is True) **% Said "False"**	17	14
Policies Ensure Equal Status Of French And English In The Public Service (Statement Is True) **% Said "False"**	7	17

(Source: Detailed Tables p. 165–166)

6. Official Languages Training: Policies And Pitfalls

Some public servants were not convinced that increasing language training within the public service would balance the use of the two official languages. Many expressed the view that language training is currently available to all those who want it. However, some Francophones noted that there is a waiting list for those who wish to learn English, and there is a sense that because of this Francophones are once again being disadvantaged.

A related view is that any additional money would have a more positive impact if put into the school system where it could be used to ensure children learn both languages. It is seen as a waste of resources to spend limited funds providing language training to older workers nearing retirement.

Others were of the opinion that increased language training would increase the use of both official languages. However, they qualified this by noting that in order for increased language training to have a positive impact certain conditions would have to be met:

- Individuals would have to be encouraged to practice what they've learned.
- Different goals for language training would have to be established. Currently, the perception is that the goal is to pass the language test. The goal should be to learn the language.

The overall message is therefore mixed. As noted above, some feel that there is a sufficient amount of language training available to those who want it, and others feel that increasing resources on training is a *sine qua non* for more successful implementation.

Otherwise, the attitudes of employees on official languages training appears to cluster under four headings: fear, satisfaction, insufficiency, and the need to maintain currency.

Fear: Participants who have not experienced language training think it might prove to be a stressful and unpleasant experience, perhaps because language training seems associated currently with job security and the need to succeed.

Satisfaction: By contrast, those who have undergone language training have generally found the experience positive and enriching.

Insufficiency: Participants complain, loudly and repeatedly, that a failure to provide adequate support for the Official Languages policy is the root cause of any problem. This lack of support — in training slots, in resources, in back-up personnel, in training for anticipated rather than current requirements, and in the provision of sufficient tools — impedes the implementation of the policy both directly and indirectly, the latter by conveying the message that the policy has lower value (and priority) than achieving other goals. As noted by one:

> *The night classes were a challenge because they occurred after a full day's work and were on my own time. Also, the training took place downtown, a 20-minute drive from where I work, which added considerably to the time I was away from the office for the noon-hour class. Often the demands of work prevented me from going. You really have to be dedicated to learning French here, because they don't make it easy. The commitment is just about all yours--not the organization's. (English Bulletin-board Group D1)*

And another in terms of the burden required by the effort to become bilingual:

> *I am frustrated with the current language training policy. As I am in a unilingual English position, I am penalized for taking French training during office hours. I am required to work additional hours each week to make up my time. I feel that this is a deterrent for many especially when we are permitted to take other work related courses during office time. (English Bulletin-board Group I1)*

Maintaining Currency: Language training must be ongoing to be successful.

D. Attitudes About The Minority Community And Segmentation Of The Public Service

1. The View Of The Minority Language Community

The qualitative investigation found confusion with regards to policies relating to minority language communities. For example, some confused the minority language community with linguistic groups that speak languages other than French or English. Others felt that dealing with the linguistic minority was not relevant to their department since the policies and initiatives they developed had no impact on the minority group.

On the quantitative side six statements were developed by and with Canadian Heritage in an effort to measure various aspects relating to the situation of the minority language group in the community. Attitudes on these issues are profiled by region, first official language, bilingualism, and sex of the respondent. The greatest amount of variability can be found in the regional variables. In general, the view from Quebec and New Brunswick was the most positive whereas that from British Columbia was the least positive. The weight of the National Capital Region in the public service produced results very much in line with those of the population as a whole.

As for the other variables, sex had virtually no effect on opinions whereas first official language produced differences on some of the attitude statements (notably on the importance of service to the public in both official languages; the perception on the minority language group receiving service to the same extent as the majority; and whether the federal government should be doing more to support the province's minority community). The bilingualism of the individuals also produced differing attitudes when compared to those who were not bilingual. However, as one would expect, the attitudes of the bilingual public servants tended to follow those held by respondents whose first official language was French since two-thirds of the bilinguals fall into this category.

(See Exhibits 10-a)/10-b)

EXHIBIT: 10-a)

Profiling Of The Agreement With 6 Statements About The Community

	% Agree	Region										
	Total Population (5,014) %	B.C./ Yukon (499) %	Atla./ NWT / Nun. (320) %	Man./ Sask. (352) %	Ont. (605) %	NCR (1,898) %	Ont N.E. (58) %	Mtl. (265) %	Qc (365) %	Other Qc (43) %	N.B. (148) %	N.S./ Nfld. (462) %
"As public service employees, it is important for us to serve the public in both official languages."	92	**83**	88	90	84	97	97	99	99	**100**	99	86
"In my province the minority community has the same access to jobs in the federal public service as the majority."	78	80	81	84	77	76	**68**	79	80	83	**87**	81
"The minority language group in my province receives service from the federal government in their language to the same extent the majority does."	69	57	60	65	66	70	54	**93**	89	**93**	81	**53**
"The situation of the minority community in my province has improved over the last 10 years."	66	**53**	63	58	67	67	82	64	69	77	**89**	72
"The federal government should be doing more to support the development of my province's minority community."	49	**38**	43	43	43	56	**58**	42	41	39	57	52
"In my province the future of the minority language is threatened."	30	**41**	29	38	26	36	39	**12**	14	19	25	24

(Source: Detailed Tables p. 221, 234, 247, 260, 273, 286)

EXHIBIT: 10-b)
Profiling Of The Agreement With 6 Statements About The Community

	% Agree	1st Official Language		Bilingual		Sex	
	Total Population (5,014) %	English (3,403) %	French (1,646) %	Yes (2,079) %	No (2,935) %	Male (2,197) %	Female (2,817) %
"As public service employees, it is important for us to serve the public in both official languages."	92	89	99	99	88	92	93
"In my province the minority community has the same access to jobs in the federal public service as the majority."	78	78	79	77	79	81	76
"The minority language group in my province receives service from the federal government in their language to the same extent the majority does."	69	63	81	73	66	67	71
"The situation of the minority community in my province has improved over the last 10 years."	66	66	66	65	67	68	64
"The federal government should be doing more to support the development of my province's minority community."	49	44	58	59	41	48	49
"In my province the future of the minority language is threatened."	30	29	34	38	25	28	32

(Source: Detailed Tables p. 219, 232, 245, 258, 271, 284)

2. Cluster Analysis

One of the main objectives of the study was to assess the attitudes espoused by public servants vis-à-vis linguistic duality. Apart from merely measuring these attitudes, one of the major problems confronting the researcher, is the orderly classification of the data. In order to deal with this data reduction and classification problem, we employed a statistical technique for segmenting our sample population into homogeneous groupings using a procedure known as cluster analysis, part of the field of numerical taxonomy. The objective of cluster analysis is to separate our respondents into groups such that

each respondent within a group is more like the others in the group than like those outside the group. Three sets of data were employed for the segmentation, the eight True-False statements measuring knowledge of Official Languages policies, twelve attitude statements about bilingualism in the public service; and six attitude statements dealing with the minority community in their province.

Each cluster was analyzed in terms of these three sets of data and a typology was derived. Based on the typology, each cluster was named in order to communicate the essence of the underlying belief set and all clusters are homogeneous in terms of their knowledge and attitudes about official languages. The reader is reminded, however, that naming clusters is a subjective exercise and not objective science.

Cluster 1 — 16.9% Of The Population
"The Irrepressible Optimists"

Although less bilingual than the population of public servants as a whole, this group is very much in agreement with Official Languages policies in a positive and proactive manner. They are in favour of bilingualism, they feel it should be promoted in the public service. They are satisfied with the way language policies affect them personally and would be willing to make an effort to foster bilingualism in their workplace. They believe in the good faith of the actors and feel that linguistic problems can be resolved to everyone's satisfaction. In terms of the minority language community in their province, they feel things are good, their future is not threatened, they receive service in their language from the federal government and there is no reason for the federal government to be doing more.

On the descriptive variables we note that compared to the population of public servants this group includes proportionately more Anglophones (first official language), they occupy proportionately more English or French positions and are a little younger than the sample average. They come from Western Canada and Quebec and can be found more in Large or Very Large departments. They are slightly more prevalent in the Scientific/Professional occupation category. Members of this group belong to linguistic majority groups in regions where their own language is the language of work.

Cluster 2 — 10.7% Of The Population
"The Official Languages Skeptics"

This group is the least bilingual and the most English of the seven. Its members have a pretty negative view of bilingualism; it does not promote unity, it is a waste of money, it generates tensions among those who do not speak the other language. In fact, their view is neatly encapsulated in the statement that "it should be French only in Quebec and English only everywhere else". In terms of their community they don't see a threat to the minority language and certainly don't believe the federal government should be doing more. Among the groups, they expressed the least amount of agreement on the importance of public service employees serving the public in both official languages.

Demographically, this group is composed nearly completely of Anglophones (first official language) with a preponderance of older males (45+). They come from Western Canada, notably B.C., and Ontario. A few more can be found in Technical positions than for the population of public servants as a whole.

Worth mentioning is the fact that their knowledge of Official Languages policies, as determined via the eight question test, is not much different from that of public servants as a whole.

Cluster 3 — 17.4% Of The Population
"The Children Of The Just Society"

Although not quite the most bilingual of the seven groups, more than half are bilingual and they have a very positive view of the benefits of this duality. Bilingualism promotes national unity and, in fact, as far as they are concerned the federal government should be doing more. They are generally satisfied with how Official Language policies affect them personally and feel it would be good to allow public servants to work in their first official language. The active offer via the bilingual greeting is important as far they are concerned.

They don't see the minority community in their province as being threatened but they do feel that the federal government should be doing more. In their view, the minority community does receive service from the federal government in their language to the same extent as the majority. Their view is that the situation of the minority community has improved over the last ten years.

This group's knowledge of language policies is a bit hazy on some points. More of them think that supervisors can determine the language of work and they ***all*** believe that the goal of language policies is to make the majority of public service positions bilingual.

This group contains a much higher proportion of Francophones than the public service as a whole. Demographically, there are more females under 35 years of age with fewer than ten years of service. This group contains the highest proportion from the N.C.R. with nearly half its members from the region. In terms of occupation, many belong to the Administrative Support category with proportionately fewer in the Management, Scientific/Professional and Administrative & Foreign Services categories.

Cluster 4 — 12% Of The Population
"The Official Languages Professionals"

This group is characterized by two important traits: better and more complete knowledge of Official Languages policies as determined in the 'test' and employment in Management, Scientific/Professional and Administrative & Foreign Service occupations. Although knowledgeable, they are not cynical and feel that bilingualism and its promotion within the public service is something that is positive and worth doing. On the other hand, they are not "Pollyanna's" and are less certain that the federal government is providing service to the minority to the same extent as the majority. Furthermore, proportionately more of them see a threat to the future of the minority language in their province and most feel the federal government should be doing more to support their province's linguistic minority community.

More than half this group are males, unlike the public service as a whole. Half this group comes from the N.C.R. with another strong contingent from the Maritimes. Males in the 45-54 year group are disproportionately numerous.

Cluster 5 — 17.4% Of The Population
"The Positive-Minded Interventionists"

This group has a very positive view of the benefits of the government's bilingualism policies; they are not a waste of time and money and do promote national unity and a feeling of belonging. Most of them disagree that using both languages promotes tensions and bad feelings among those who do not speak the two. This group would be willing to make an effort to foster bilingualism in their workplace and they are confident that in the public service any linguistic problems that arise can be resolved to everyone's satisfaction. Furthermore, they are satisfied with the way the language policies affect them personally. The defining trait of this group of individuals is their belief that the federal government should be doing more to promote both official languages in the public service ***and*** even if they don't feel that the future of the minority community in their province is threatened, they believe the government should be doing more to support the development of their province's minority community.

Although they think the federal government should be doing more it is not because the minority does not have access to jobs. Of all the groups, they most strongly believe that the situation of the minority community has improved over the last ten years.

Demographically, this group is relatively unremarkable and does not differ very much from the profile of the public service as a whole. The proportion of 45-54 year old males is a bit greater with a slightly higher Western Canadian and Atlantic representation. Management and Scientific/Professional employment categories are slightly under-represented but we do find more from the Administrative & Foreign Service category. This group is as bilingual as the public service as a whole (42%) and the proportion of Anglophones and Francophones are completely representative of the totality.

Cluster 6 — 13.7% Of The Population
"The Cautious-Minded Realists"

Unlike most other public servants, this group subscribes to the view that using both languages generates tension and bad feelings between employees who do not speak the other language. They hold this view notwithstanding the fact that this group has generally positive attitudes on other aspects of the bilingualism policies—they agree that bilingualism promotes national unity and a feeling of belonging; they are satisfied with policies as they affect them personally; they agree it is important to use a bilingual greeting when dealing with the public.

This group strongly feels that the federal government should ***not*** be doing more to support the development of their province's linguistic minority community. This view is based on the perception that the minority community receives service in their language to the same extent the majority does, it has the same access to jobs and furthermore most agree that the situation of the minority community has improved over the last ten years. Since many in this group come from Quebec and the N.C.R., their view of the situation of the minority community is undoubtedly focused on the Anglophone minority in Quebec.

The profile that emerges on the classification variables is that of a group that is more Francophone with a considerably greater representation from Quebec. They are more bilingual and occupy proportionately more bilingual positions and Management positions which, although few in absolute numbers, are twice as prevalent in this group as in the sample average as a whole. More of this group work in medium sized departments (2,000 – 7,000 employees).

Cluster 7 — 11.8% Of The Population
"The Worried Minority"

As the name chosen for this group clearly conveys, these individuals espouse the view that the linguistic minority in their community is not well served by the federal government, its future is threatened, and its situation has not improved over the last ten years. As far as they are concerned, even in terms of access to jobs in the federal public service, many are of the opinion that the minority group does not get the same chance as the majority. The major attitude drivers in this group all come from perceptions relating to the linguistic minority's status in the community. In terms of their attitudes about language policies within the public service, they hold a positive view and see it as a worthwhile endeavour. Most feel the federal government should be doing more to promote both official languages in the public service and they are just about all willing to make an effort to foster bilingualism in their workplace. Of all the groups, they had the lowest level of agreement with the statement that it should be French only in Quebec and English only everywhere else.

Although this group contained proportionately more Francophones than the sample average, they did not come from Quebec but are drawn primarily from the West and the National Capital Region. This is a very bilingual group that occupies bilingual positions. Female employees are a bit more prevalent and generally younger with fewer years of service. They cluster in Medium and Small sized departments and more of them can be found in Management and Scientific and Professional occupations and few in Technical positions.

E. Some Perspectives On Official Languages Policies

1. The Weight Of Demographics

If we consider the proportional balance of French and English-speaking people in each location, it becomes apparent that the relative size of one group relative to the other has a dramatic impact on how the issue of official languages is processed. It would appear that the issue of official languages is processed – and lived – more favorably in areas where there is greater equilibrium between the two linguistic groups. Conversely, many things such as attitudes, openness, understanding and "buy-in" seem to degrade in relative terms as these proportions become more imbalanced.

From a macro perspective then, this variable suggests that the official languages "climate" would be more positive, or more productive, in areas such as New Brunswick or Ottawa than they would in Quebec City, Toronto or Vancouver. Some of the following observations from the groups would appear to support this contention:

- Generally speaking, participants in areas where relative linguistic equilibrium exists tend to know more about the origins and impetus for the Act, and *tend toward greater consensus on this matter with the "other" community.*

- There seems to be a stronger tendency to describe the imperatives behind the program in more human, as opposed to institutional or political terms. In this sense, the imperative for adhering to the policy, and even the general need for this policy is more likely to be seen in light of local realities, and more likely to touch on personal values.

Accordingly, there are also more personal implications attendant in these areas where linguistic equilibrium is achieved:

- The stakes for adhering or failing to adhere to the policy are also apparently enhanced in personal impact. In these areas, we sense that participants

have a keener awareness of how bilingualism can advance or hinder one's career, or how the organization's failure to live up to the spirit or intent of the policy can impact on the group's climate or culture. Not surprisingly, then, we also see evidence to suggest that adherence to the letter of the Act is more important. Participants are also better able to articulate the spirit of the legislation.

- Participants from areas in linguistic equilibrium are also more inclined than others to seize on the benefits and rewards surrounding the legislation than the sanctions. While people in these areas exhibit no specific attitude about the bilingual bonus (a topic that generates mixed feeling across all groups), we do encounter evidence to suggest that the rewards are both more tangible and more personal – such a person is more likely to want to become bilingual, if only because this has a more realistic likelihood of providing some form of tangible benefit for working life, for one's personal enrichment, etc.

Ultimately, we see that there is an intimate relationship between exposure to linguistic duality and "buy-in" to the official languages policy. There is much evidence to suggest that daily contact with people who live and work in the other language raises the stakes, makes compliance more worthwhile, and has a whole host of other influences that make the application of the policy easier. It also suggests that programs designed to move key people into these regions – a strategic personnel management policy, might have some beneficial impact (any such programs would obviously have to be voluntary).

2. A Simplified Typology

In order to understand some of the apparent barriers to forward movement on official languages, and to paint some areas of "common ground" toward which communications strategies may strive, we offer the following view on how to group public servants. It should be taken as a given that the perspective described here is predicated on the assumption that both Anglophones and Francophones will have to be entreated to "move", to compromise, and consider changes to their perspectives of the

official languages issue. It is also presumed here that this movement is required as well from public servants who are bilingual, and who otherwise may be adhering to the letter of the Official Languages Act. Finally, it is also presumed here that a shift in the values, which may be what is necessary, may not be possible with a certain segment of public servants at this time.

The "**unconverted**", in our analysis, present a set of generally recognizable characteristics:

- They tend to be most prominent among public servants who have had comparatively little exposure to the "other" linguistic group;
- They tend to perceive the Official Languages policy to be an "imposition", originating in Ottawa, and reflective of a centrist, political concern that they either do not recognize or do not see as important;
- In keeping with the above, adherence to the letter and the spirit of the Official Languages Act is a matter of institutional more than personal relevance. They tend to see the stakes involved mostly in light of non-compliance, and mostly as a matter of avoiding sanction.
- They tend to describe themselves in a manner that would suggest that they themselves feel incapable of responding to the demands of the policy, especially in the common case where these demands appear exaggerated or excessive.

In opposition to this group, there is clearly a large swath of participants who would appear "**converted**", if only by dint of their personal attitudes and behavior. These individuals can be recognized by virtue of:

- A tendency to see the Official Languages Act and its regulations more as an opportunity than an imposition, and while these individuals may not necessarily be bilingual, they most certainly would describe this ability as an asset, and be more open to becoming so;
- Generally, their conceptualization of the spirit of the legislation and the policy would place notions such as respect, tolerance and accommodation over other matters;
- As a group, these individuals would demonstrate clear and tangible concern for the comfort level in their working environment, and place a premium on good working relationships. Tellingly, however, these individuals would also

recognize clear boundaries in this sense, and would concede the existence of a point where the assertion of language would have to supersede the comfort of other individuals or the group;

- Generally speaking, these individuals would recognize a personal, as well as an organizational and institutional imperative in compliance with the policy.

- Finally, these individuals would see no incompatibilities between the aims of the legislation, their own values, and their own ultimate ability to comply. To be sure, this presumes individuals who see the letter the specific demands of the policy as reasonable, and at least attainable to some degree for them personally. As a group, they tend to be concentrated in areas where the proportion of both linguistic communities are relatively balanced, or at least where the "other" group presents a "critical mass".

The "***uncommitted middle***", with the greatest propensity to respond to communications on official languages are those that fall somewhere between the two poles of attitude. They tend to be found in unilingual regions and although they tend to greater ignorance about the letter and the spirit of the legislation (but otherwise present a certain degree of openness to its tenets), they are open to suggestion about the aims of the policy.

3. Leadership

One of the most significant drivers on language of work – positively or negatively – is the behaviour and attitudes of senior management. One public servant put the case succintly:

> *Dans nos contacts avec nos collègues et superviseurs et dans les communications au sein du gouvernement, on devrait effectivement être capable de communiquer dans la langue de notre choix, mais on en est encore loin. La politique n'est pas assez connue, et on ne demande pas de comptes (ou presque pas) aux gestionnaires et à la haute direction à ce sujet, ce qui fait en sorte que les efforts sont insuffisants. Par ailleurs, je crois que chacun devrait être conscient de notre pouvoir collectif d'apporter des changements ; si tous les employés prenaient le temps de faire des efforts pour que ça s'améliore, on verrait des changements, petit à petit. Je blâme surtout les agences centrales et les dirigeants, mais on est tous un peu coupables. (French Bulletin-board Group J1)*

It is clear that senior management and Ministers have a preponderant role to play in the day-to-day implementation of the policy. And without their buy-in, many of the initiatives that could be envisaged will not move forward.

F. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Official Languages policies seek to be even-handed, although the demographic weight of English influences attitudes and behaviour. Our view, based on the research results, is that the overall linguistic situation in the public service, although not perfect, does appear to be quite good with adequate levels of bilingualism across most entities. Linguistic tensions exist to some degree but most public servants seem to be relatively satisfied with their situation. Beyond the small minority, cynicism and recalcitrance have not set in and there still appears to be a feeling in the large majority of public servants that bilingualism is a goal worth pursuing. The reality is somewhat removed from the ideal. When bilingual Anglophones in Bilingual regions report speaking French only 14% of the time when bilingual Francophones report more than 40% English, then there is obviously some room for improvement.

After so many years one would have thought that there would be little ambiguity left around the specific language policies. This is not the case, and there is still considerable misinformation deeply rooted in the public service. Clear messages could be developed and disseminated in order to address the issues uncovered in the survey research.

In terms of their attitudes about language, public servants are clearly not an homogeneous mass but can be differentiated into smaller groups that encompass much more complex visions of the linguistic situation they face at work and in everyday life in their community.

From a communications and strategy development perspective, it is possible to consider the most important variables in this official languages "equation", and recognize situations where these combine as a means of identifying the most pressing communication target. This would, by definition, describe groups of individuals who:

- Adhere to the characteristics of the "uncommitted middle" described above;

- Have an exaggerated sense of the demands imposed by the legislation, generally as a result of contact with and influence by his or her peers;
- Do not, probably because of a failure to consider the notion, recognize any compatibility between their personal values and the aims of the legislation. This in turn has likely contributed to a sense that the stakes here are more institutional than personal.
- Have very ambiguous, unformed and unclear sense of what the end-goal, spirit or aims of the policy are, either for their immediate environment or the whole of the public service;
- Tend to believe that their personal ability to meet the demands of the legislation are insufficient, either because of their sense of their own limitations, or because of their sense that the demands are too great.

The strategy being proposed is predicated on the view that Treasury Board can, and should communicate more effectively about the letter and most importantly, the spirit of the legislation. Failure to do so, at least for these individuals, represents an abdication of potential influence over the issue. It seems clearest of all, in retrospect, that the distinguishing characteristic between those who would willingly comply with the policy and those who would not is the degree to which they have internalized the aims of the policy. In this light, ignorance or misperceptions about this aspect of official languages represents an obvious communication objective, and one that will likely produce results.

On the same note, it also apparent that other groups of public servants are failing to "come onboard" simply because they have internalized an exaggerated sense of the demands of the policy, compared these to their own limited means, and concluded that there is no reasonable chance of complying. It was both fascinating and discouraging to note how insidious this dynamic was in the discussions: few people voiced this perspective openly, but it was nonetheless apparent that many participants consider the prospect of speaking the other language something that is beyond their reach. When this is the perceived end-goal of the policy, the magnitude of this barrier increases correspondingly.

In order to improve delivery and perceptions relating to Official Languages within the public service of Canada, three fundamental issues must be addressed:

- Axis 1: Defining the 'ideal' Official Languages work environment;
- Axis 2: Redressing misperceptions about the breadth and demands of the policy;
- Axis 3: Establishing clearer standards in hierarchical communications.

Axis 1: Defining the "Ideal" Official Languages Work Environment

Clearly, there is far from a consensus point of view on what the end goal of the policy is, or how one might describe an "ideal" official languages working environment. The more formed of these visions extend across a spectrum between a fully bilingual public service to a more practical, limited vision of a functionally or passively bilingual public service. (Acknowledging as well the perspective of the unconvertible who would like to see the whole question of language dropped!). The ambiguity that exists in this sense, however, is apparently the source of much impediment. If the goal is ultimately to make everyone bilingual, then it does not stand to reason that the employer would see fit to restrict access to language training. In the same vein, paying individuals for being bilingual when they are not in fact required to use the second language is arguably incompatible with the end goal of a functionally bilingual public service.

For Francophones, it seems clear that redressing the impression (apparent, but not overt in our discussions) that progress is not being made unless the English-speaking are in fact able to speak French is a good place to start. **The spirit of "passive" bilingualism**, where everyone is minimally able to accommodate meetings, transactions, communiqués, and so on in the other languages **is one definitive aspect of a common, consensus-based vision of an ideal official languages environment**. More importantly, moving Francophones toward the view that this end-vision is compatible with their sense of the stakes would likely do much to improve the situation.

By the same token, it seems clear as well that some Francophones need to be reminded that their failure to assert *their own right to self-expression in their language* can be ultimately self-defeating. The required message here may be to say to French-

speaking public servants that being *heard* and understood in their own language is enough, **but that they must in fact exercise this right**.

If, on the other hand, the end-goal is *passive* bilingualism, then efforts should be made to attenuate anyone's reflex to complain if the person from the "other" community does not address them in their language. In this light, every meeting that succeeds in having each individual speak in his or her own language *and be fully understood* should be a cause for celebration. By the same token, and in written communication, the standard should be less how many documents and emails are issued in both languages, but rather how many don't need to be translated.

For Anglophones, it seems clear that much more work needs to be done, if only because it is in this community that the most ambiguity exists around the idea of what the policy expects of them. Accordingly, it seems clear that messaging should focus on establishing clearer, and more attainable, measures of progress, and at the same time, raising awareness of how important progress toward these goals is. The standard of passive bilingualism defined above, as an example, would be productive in this sense if only because it is something clearly more compatible with the senses of self and of personal abilities of many participants. While many indicate that active bilingualism is beyond their reach, the goal of learning to hear and understand the other language is much less so.

Axis 2: Redressing Misperceptions About The Breadth And Demands Of The Policy

The simplest, and yet possibly one of the more important communication tasks is simply to inform public servants about the policy, and particularly the policy as it relates to language of work. While the subject of language of service is only partially understood, we encountered a lot more confusion and lack of clarity surrounding the issue of language of work. In addition, this confusion increases with distance, so that the imperative to clarify and explain *grows* rather than diminishes in areas that are not declared bilingual for language of work.

Axis 3: Establishing Clearer Standards in Hierarchical Communications

Passive bilingualism, presented as a component part of the ideal language work environment works only in the context of peer-to-peer communications. While it may appear to participants to be a workable practice for meetings, written communications and the like, it obviously cannot play the same role in *hierarchical* communications. In these instances, the onus must be placed on the person at the higher level to speak in the language of the person at the lower level. While this is arguably already a principle built into the official language policy, it nonetheless stands out as a principle that few participants fully understand.

The confusion or lack of clarity around this principle – and the fact that more people intuit its presence than recognize it in an overt fashion constitutes a significant obstacle to forward progress. This obstacle is manifest in many of the comments and attitudes we encountered, but particularly in the resentment many participants expressed about how their chances for promotion *felt* circumscribed by their language abilities. In keeping with many patterns described to date, this resentment appears to grow with distance from the "other" community. We see evidence that the ambiguity itself is the source of fear and anxiety, to the extent that participants' anxiety is well founded, but not rendered explicit.

This ambiguity should clearly constitute a major target for the communication activities, as it stands to reason that there is nothing wrong with this principle save for the fact that it is not widely and fully understood. In our discussions, it was apparent that the frustrations and anxieties surrounding this notion were more attributable to its lack of clarity than lack of moral or organizational grounding. Generally, most participants will concede the notion that *delivery* in the other language increases in importance and good sense as the authority of the communicator increases.

In addition to the above axes which will require considerable work to operationalize, some other more easily solved issues should be addressed and corrected:

- There was sufficient anecdotal evidence in the qualitative exploration to suggest instances where existing policies are unenforced. These ranged from ministerial speeches only provided in one language, to public consultations without adequate language resources, to visible delays in implementing language policies at the senior levels, to entire central agencies that are unapologetically unilingual in their operations and staffing.

- Any information campaign be backed up with significant support for the policy. A policy without adequate and visible support will starve and atrophy.

- Finally, and as a matter of principle as much as an axis of communication, we cannot do justice to the perspective of participants without pointing out that many feel that the implementation of the policy lacks transparency and consistency in some important respects. The two most prominent examples of this have to do with the bilingual bonus and designating the language requirements of positions:

  - The bonus, for its part, is decried whenever it is paid to people who either do not appear to have the proficiency it suggests, or more importantly, when the beneficiary fails to use the language. This latter example is even more troubling (and described in a manner that would suggest it's fairly common) in hierarchical situations.

  - The process of attributing language requirements to job postings is problematic to the extent that the motives for declaring a job to be "imperative" or "essential" is often obscure. This suggests that a clear set of standards is required, or, if they exist, that they be communicated more clearly.